



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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North Dakota Reports First West Nile Virus-Related Death in 2006

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health today announced the state's first West Nile virus-related death in 2006, according to State Epidemiologist Kirby Kruger. In addition, 12 other new cases also were identified.

The individual was a resident of southeastern North Dakota who died while hospitalized. According to Kruger, the man was older than 60 and had underlying medical conditions.

“The death of this man is a reminder of the seriousness of West Nile virus, especially to the elderly and those with other medical concerns,” Kruger said. “Although the risk of serious illness to most people is low, I urge residents to continue to take steps to protect themselves from mosquito bites and this virus.”

To reduce the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes that carry West Nile virus, the state health department recommends the following protective measures:

- Use insect repellent that contains DEET and is approved by the Environmental Protection Agency. (Read all instructions carefully.)
- Limit outdoor activities between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most likely to bite.
- Wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts when possible.
- Eliminate stagnant water and leaf debris in containers around homes where mosquitoes can lay their eggs (e.g., buckets, flowerpots, old tires, wading pools and birdbaths).
- Keep mosquitoes from entering your home by repairing screens in windows and doors.
- Keep the grass around your home trimmed.

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Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

The following is a summary of West Nile virus activity to date:

- Human cases – 23
 - Total tests conducted – 268
 - Counties: Burke (1), Burleigh (14), Dickey (1), McHenry (1), McIntosh (1), Morton (2), Richland (1), Stutsman (1), Walsh (1)
- Human deaths – 1
- WNV-positive dead birds – 6
 - Total dead birds tested – 25
 - Counties – Barnes, Cass
- WNV-positive live birds – 36
 - Total live birds tested – 754
 - Counties – Burleigh, Cass, Grand Forks, Ramsey, Stark, Stutsman, Ward, Williams
- WNV-positive horses – 4
 - Total horses tested – 19
 - Counties – Barnes, Burleigh, Sheridan, Towner

“Although much of the state is dry, we know that mosquitoes are spreading the virus throughout North Dakota,” said Tracy Miller, West Nile Virus Program manager. “It’s important that everyone take precautions to avoid mosquito bites. Even though the mosquitoes may be fewer in number, it takes only one bite from an infected mosquito for someone to catch West Nile virus.”

For more information about West Nile virus, visit the health department website at www.ndwnv.com or contact Tracy Miller or Michelle Feist, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2378.

The Department of Health’s policy on confidentiality and release of information about West Nile virus deaths is available at www.nddohpressroom.gov.

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